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LETTER DATED 21 MARCH 1991 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of some comments on a post-crisis settlement in the Persian Gulf area.

I request you to circulate this text as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Y. VORONTSOV

## Annex

### Comments on a post-crisis settlement in the Persian Gulf area

The Kuwaiti crisis and its solution have come as a test to see how strong the "new thinking" really is. By withstanding this test the world community has demonstrated that it has come a long way: from the cold war to a new system of international relations.

In order to build on this success in the post-crisis period, it is necessary to maintain a high degree of interaction and collaboration when addressing the problems the conflict has generated in the Persian Gulf area.

Sustained normalization in the Persian Gulf could be beneficial to the climate in the Middle East as a whole by promoting solutions to problems resulting from the long-standing Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Soviet Union is closely monitoring the current flow of ideas concerning the post-crisis settlement in the Gulf. Many of the initiatives in this regard contain approaches which are identical or similar to ours.

In our view, security in the post-crisis period could be achieved through a series of practical steps along the following lines:

1. The key role in determining the parameters of the post-crisis settlement in the Persian Gulf area belongs, of course, to the Gulf States themselves. It is for them, in the first place, to decide where the balance of their rights and interests lies because, for many years to come, that balance will form the basis of broad political and other cooperation among them. What is meant here is not the creation of closed, bloc-type groupings cut off from other countries, which would be a source of new antagonisms and would cause old ones to be revived. A post-crisis settlement should not be directed against anyone. On the contrary, it should promote interaction among all the interested States in the region and those which, though outside the region, are making an important contribution towards maintaining peace and stability there.

It is important that the fundamental principles of international law, such as, inter alia, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, non-use or threat of force, settlement of disputes by peaceful means, acceptance of the right of every State in the region to sovereignty and territorial integrity within its existing internationally recognized borders, should serve as the basis for future agreements between the interested parties.

The best option would be a comprehensive multilateral treaty or bilateral treaties, in conformity with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, supplemented by appropriate international guarantees on the part of the Security Council and its five permanent members.

2. The Kuwaiti crisis underlines the urgent need for consistent steps towards limitation of the arms race in the region. Notwithstanding all the complexities of this process, it is already feasible to put forward the goal of maintaining the balance of forces on ever-decreasing levels of armaments, until the lowest level compatible with defence requirements is reached.

The most critical issue is how to provide an effective shield against the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and other weapons of mass destruction in the region. Proposals on the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of these types of weapons deserves serious attention. It is important that all the Middle East countries accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons.

It is necessary to consider seriously the issue of the balanced reduction of arms supplies to the region. This matter requires a responsible approach on the part of the main suppliers of arms and of their buyers. It is of primary importance that the countries should demonstrate restraint as regards the supply and acquisition of offensive weapons, especially missiles and missile technology. For optimal solutions to this problem, appropriate collective agreements are required, including agreements on verification mechanisms.

It would be sensible to be guided by the experience of other regions in the matter of implementing confidence-building measures, such as notification of military manoeuvres, invitations to observers to attend them, establishment of demilitarized zones and zones with reduced concentrations of weapons.

3. Foreign military presence should not exceed the levels which existed in the region before 1 August 1990. If foreign military support is needed for a given period of time, United Nations peace-keeping forces or United Nations observers or both, together with the necessary contingents of Arab, Muslim and other countries, could play their role.

4. The task of developing the comprehensive economic cooperation of the countries of the region is in the first instance the task of effecting the post-war reconstruction of destroyed economies.

Coordinated international action must be taken to undo the damage caused to the environment by military operations.

Without calling into question the inviolability of the principle of States' sovereignty over their natural resources, a fresh look should be taken at the goal of ensuring greater social and economic stability of the region through a gradual levelling and harmonization of the economic development of its countries.

5. A broad consensus is emerging among countries, including the countries of the region, that an important role should be played by the United Nations in international support of the post-crisis settlement in the Persian Gulf. This is a logical consequence of the role which the Security Council played in organizing a collective rebuff to Iraqi aggression and also a corollary of Security Council resolution 598 (1987).

In the first place, the United Nations can act as an effective guarantor of compliance with agreements.

Our proposal to establish naval forces under the United Nations flag in case of any threats to shipping in the Persian Gulf remains relevant. A new level of confidence between the permanent members of the Security Council justifies the resumption of a detailed discussion of the question of the involvement of the United Nations Military Staff Committee in crisis situations.

6. The easing of military tension in the Persian Gulf subregion and in the Middle East as a whole requires purposeful efforts to eliminate political causes of instability and conflicts there.

Unanimous opinion on the part of the international community favouring a rapid and radical improvement of the situation in the region, where the interests of a large number of States are closely interwoven, provide a better environment for embarking on the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict without delay. Successful efforts in this respect would enable the security system which is in the process of being established in the Persian Gulf to be integrated into broader regional structures. This would undoubtedly enhance the security of the peoples in the Near and Middle East.

We believe that the establishment of a region-wide security system should not be an isolated act but should rather be a process which would require time to develop. There is therefore all the more need to undertake the first steps as soon as possible, in order to make progress in the areas where success is genuinely feasible.

In putting forward these ideas we are certainly not claiming to possess the ultimate answer. The introduction of new inter-State relations in the region will require active political and diplomatic efforts, with the participation of the largest number of interested countries. The Soviet Union is ready to contribute to the speedy solution of the problems related to the post-crisis settlement in the Persian Gulf, to discuss any constructive ideas and to collaborate actively with all the parties concerned: the Persian Gulf States, other Arab and Muslim States, the permanent members of the Security Council, and the Western European and non-aligned countries.

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